

February 22, 1961

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I have had an opportunity, due to the return of Ambassador Thompson, to have an extensive review of all aspects of our relations with the Secretary of State and with him. In these consultations, we have been able to explore, in general, not only those subjects which are of direct bilateral concern to the United States and the Soviet Union, but also the chief outstanding international problems which affect our relations.

I have not been able, in so brief a time, to reach definite conclusions as to our position on all of these matters. Many of them are affected by developments in the international scene and are of concern to many other governments. I would, however, like to set before you certain general considerations which I believe might be of help in introducing a greater element of clarity in the relations between our two countries. I say this because I am sure that you are as conscious as I am of the heavy responsibility which rests upon our two Governments in world affairs. I agree with your thought that if we could find a measure of cooperation on some of these current issues this, in itself, would be a significant contribution to the problem of insuring a peaceful and orderly world.

I think we should recognize, in honesty to each other, that there are problems on which we may not be able to agree. However, I believe that while recognizing that we do not and, in all probability will not, share a common view on all of these problems, I do believe that the manner in which we approach them and, in particular, the manner in which our disagreements are handled, can be of great importance.

In addition, I believe we should make more use of diplomatic channels for quiet informal discussion of these questions.

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not in the sense of negotiations (since I am sure that we both recognize the interests of other countries are deeply involved in these issues), but rather as a mechanism of communication which should, insofar as is possible, help to eliminate misunderstanding and unnecessary divergencies, however great the basic differences may be.

I hope it will be possible, before too long, for us to meet personally for an informal exchange of views in regard to some of these matters. Of course, a meeting of this nature will depend upon the general international situation at the time, as well as on our mutual schedules of engagements.

I have asked Ambassador Thompson to discuss the question of our meeting. Ambassador Thompson, who enjoys my full confidence, is also in a position to inform you of my thinking on a number of the international issues which we have discussed. I shall welcome any expression of your views. I hope such exchange might assist us in working out a responsible approach to our differences with the view to their ultimate resolution for the benefit of peace and security throughout the world. You may be sure, Mr. Chairman, that I intend to do everything I can toward developing a more harmonious relationship between our two countries.

Sincerely,

His Excellency
Nikita S. Khrushchev,
Chairman of the Council of
Ministers of the USSR,
The Kremlin,
Moscow.